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SERMON XXIII.*

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THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

"AND I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—ST. JOHN 12: 32.

OUR Lord was crucified on Friday, April the seventh, in the year 30. On Wednesday, the fifth of April, he stood for the last time within the venerable precincts of the Jewish Temple, and, in the hearing both of Jews and Gentiles, pronounced his last public discourse; a discourse which John alone of the evangelists has reported, and of which our text may be looked upon as the grand culminating utterance.

The lifting up here spoken of, has doubtless a double reference: First, to death by crucifixion; and, secondly, to the glorious ex-

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altation which was to follow. Greek proselytes, representing the Gentile world, had asked to see Jesus, that they might learn about the kingdom which he had come to establish. In two days more, the Founder of this new kingdom would be hanging dead upon the cross. The faith of these inquiring Greeks was liable to be rudely shaken by an issue seemingly so disastrous. To enable them to withstand this shock, our Lord not only accepts, but emphasizes the impending agony. His death, he assures them, will be no defeat, no disturbance even, of his plans. Lifted to the cross, he will thence be lifted to the right hand of the Father, and from that heavenly height, will carry on triumphantly his redeeming work. Nor need it be thought strange that death should thus be made the gateway to life, to glory, and to dominion. Such is the universal law. The corn of wheat must be buried in the ground to rot and perish, or it bears no fruit. Man himself must die unto self and sin, in order to live unto God eternally. Much more, then, must man's Redeemer die, in order to the assumption of his regal power. It is as though our Lord had said: Be not troubled when you see me lifted to the cross; for in this is the beginning of a kingdom, which shall spread from heart to heart, from race to race, and from century to century, till it completes at length the conquest of the globe.

And so the meaning of our text is plain. It does not teach the doctrine of universal salvation. It does not say that every single member of the human family will certainly be saved. The drawing to himself, which Christ promises, is not a compulsory, but a moral drawing, which may therefore, of course, be resisted, and rendered of no avail. As a matter of fact, palpable to every honest observer, multitudes of men, stoutly withstanding this divine attraction, have perished and are now perishing, in their sins. But the Gospel shall prove no failure. Suited as it is to the necessities of all men, and sincerely offered to all, it shall save all who embrace it. Nor shall the number of those embracing it be small. That cross of agony and shame reared on Golgotha, shall never be overturned. Men of every race, and clime, and dye of guiltiness, shall be drawn towards it, and subdued by it. Every thing else on earth shall totter and pass away; laws, customs, institutions, religions. But this shall stand unshaken amidst the nations. Jews and Gentiles, wise and foolish, high and low, bond and free, shall gather round it. High looming amidst the civilizations and the centuries, it shall stand and draw; working slowly, it may be, but working ever surely till its work is done, and great voices are heard shouting back and forth athwart the heavens, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

Christianity thus stands committed to the achievement of universal dominion. Its Founder puts it forward into history as the

universal religion, foreördained to universal prevalence. For those of us who worship Christ as God, this prophetic assurance of final victory is enough. Our lines might be much thinner than they are, our march much slower, our trophies fewer, and still we should not be disheartened. We should still stand fast by the ancient bond, which gives Christ the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Generation after generation might succeed to the arduous struggle, and still the Church would keep her camp-fires burning, never doubting that the time will come, however distant, when her camp-fires shall be kindled, and her banners shake, on every hill-top from the rising to the setting sun.

But if this be true of the Church in her instinctive loyalty to Christ, it is equally true that the asserted Divinity of Christ is itself on trial. If the religion which he established falls short of universal acceptance, if it encounters civilizations superior to it, if it comes into contact with races of men which it can not conquer, then the pretensions of its Founder are brought to shame. Scattered and partial triumphs will not suffice. Either Christianity must subdue all things to itself, or be routed entirely from field. If it do not everywhere ultimately prevail, then it is not what it claims to be, and ought not anywhere to prevail.

Setting aside therefore, for the present, the promise of its Founder, which is decisive only on the assumption of his divinity, it becomes necessary for us to entertain, on independent ground, the question, whether Christianity is likely thus to prevail. We shall have to ask ourselves whether there be anything inherent in the system itself, or any thing in its past history, prophetic of universal dominion. This, we know, has been again and again denied. In the second century it was denied by Celsus, who took the ground that different races and nations are preconfigured to different religions, and that consequently the expectation of universal diffusion for any single religion, is a foolish dream. Christianity is thus confuted at the start by the glaring absurdity of its aim. Its insane ambition of universal conquest brands it as an imbecility and a cheat. A skepticism similar to this of Celsus in regard to the ultimate universal prevalence of Christianity, exists in our day. There are those amongst us, affecting philosophy, who have no faith in our evangelism. They may indeed admit, what no candor can deny, that the religion of the cross has become the religion of the best and ruling races of mankind; but they do not believe that it can be made to traverse the whole scale of humanity. There are races of men, it is alleged, who can no more take it than they could take the refined philosophy of Plato. These races may be overborne and pushed out of history; but evangelized they can never be. Or if ever evangelized, it can not be till they have first been civilized. Nor is the faith of Christian

men themselves always as firm and buoyant as it should be. The good work goes on slowly. Empires like those of China and Japan, embracing more than a third part of the population of the globe, and millions of men everywhere, idolatrous and stupid, resist our march. On rational and historic grounds, apart from the explicit assurance of prophecy, have we any right to expect that these empires, and these millions, will ever accept the faith we offer them?

This question I now propose to answer: First, By an analysis of Christianity itself, which by making clear its marvelous adaptation to human wants, such as no human system has ever exhibited, may at the same time demonstrate the divinity of its origin, and so give double assurance of its final triumph; and secondly, by a brief glance at the past achievements of Christianity in its gallant struggle for the dominion of the world.

I. In the first place, what are the distinctive features of Christianity? Wherein does it differ from other religions? And how do these points of difference stand related to God on the one side, and to man on the other?

1. In enumerating the distinctive features of our religion, we may mention first the Incarnation of God in Christ.

If any thing is clear from history, it is clear that human nature can not endure a bald spiritual theism. Man has two thoughts of God, equally normal and necessary. He thinks of God as One Infinite Spirit, wholly separate from matter, without form, or voice, or changeable affections, transcending the limitations of time and space, wise, just, and awful in his holiness. Hence the pure monotheism now recognized as lying in the background of all the better Pagan mythologies. Hence, in part, the triumphs of Mohammed, whose wild voice out of the Arabian peninsula went pealing over three continents: "Your God is one God." That there are more gods than one, or that this One God is any thing else than pure spirit, human reason in its best estate, has always steadily refused to believe. The divine unity and spirituality were affirmed by Plato, looking the Greek polytheism boldly in the face; and were reaffirmed by the Neo-Platonists as essential parts of their eclectic creed. But human weakness and human sinfulness necessitate another conception of God. Across the great gulf between the finite and the infinite, between sin and holiness, the voice of man is afraid to speak. The human heart sinks discouraged, and shudders with affright. A being so feeble, and so defiled, must have God nearer to him. Hence the Patriarchal and Hebrew theophanies, in which the ineffable Jehovah is seen wearing the human form, and is heard speaking in human tones. Hence, likewise, the Pagan deification of nature

and man, and all the inferior divinities of the Pagan Pantheon, bridging, as best they might, the bottomless abyss which yawns betwixt the finite and the infinite, the sinful and the sinless. The idea of incarnation is thus seen to be congenial to our nature. And yet in none of the instances referred to was this idea realized. The Patriarchal and Hebrew theophanies were only transient manifestations of God in the human form; a temporary expedient of merely provisional economies. They only abated a hunger, which they could not feed. Still they served what appears to have been their providential purpose; they prevented at once the worship of nature, and the multiplication of inferior divinities. Accordingly for centuries, down even to the time of the deluge, when wicked men shrank away from the awfulness of God, they took refuge not in polytheism, but in atheism. After the Deluge, mankind, no longer able to be atheists, betook themselves to the worship of innumerable divinities. Nature in all her range was deified, from the starry hosts on high down to the mountains, the rivers, and the trees. At first these natural objects were revered only as symbols of the Divine presence and power. At first the carved or molten image was only a symbol. But in process of time the symbols themselves were worshiped. Even the Hebrews, in spite of their theophanies, were, till after the exile in Babylon, constantly lapsing into these idolatries. Outside of Judaism the declension was monstrous. The Creator was sunk and lost sight of in his creation. In the great hunger of the human heart for an incarnate God, polytheism became the faith of the masses, and pantheism the speculation of the schools. Human reason pronounces for unity in its conception of the Godhead; but the human heart, yearning for sympathy in its weakness, and stricken with terror in its defilement, cries out for an incarnate God.

This importunate demand of our finite and sinful nature is for the first time met, and fully met, by the incarnation of God in Christ. The theophanies were transient and provisional. They merely adumbrated the coming reality. The incarnations of the pagan world were all of a pantheistic type, involving no proper personal union between the Divine and the human. In the pagan philosophies, God could enter humanity no other wise than he entered nature. The tree and the man fared alike. But in Christ the two natures, each complete and perfect in itself, were united in a real, perfect personality. He was a man, born of the Virgin Mary, with a real human body, and a real human soul; as human, in every proper sense of the word, as any one of us. He was also God; not God the Father, but God the Word, the Second Person in the Trinity, whom angels worship, and who made the worlds. In one breath we may say of him that he was born and died. In the next breath we may say of him, Before Abraham began to be,

he eternally and unchangeably is. And for three and thirty years this mysterious being lived and walked in Palestine. Now he sailed upon the lake, and now he smoothed its angry billows by a word. Now he was a genial guest at a marriage feast, and now he turned the water into wine. Now he wept before a sepulcher, and now he waked the dead. Now he died himself, and now, having risen from the dead, he ascended up where he was before. Such is the Christ of the New Testament. Such was the Christ of Christendom for three hundred years before the Nicene Creed echoed the speculations of Athanasius. And such has been the Christ of Christendom, by a vast preponderance of numbers, in every succeeding century. Such, too, must continue to be the Christ of Christendom, by an equally vast preponderance of numbers, through all coming time. Here at last our nature rests. Here at last is the great hunger of the heart appeased. We need no less, as we can ask no more. God manifest in the flesh is the end of all our desires, the solace of all our sorrows, the conquest of all our fears. And what is more, even philosophy is now ranging herself on the side of faith. From pantheistic speculations there is no legitimate escape but in the doctrine of the Word made flesh. Here, then, the sage and the savage meet, bowing together at the feet of an incarnate God. The conception of such a divine humanity is equally above them both; but as an accomplished fact, it satisfies, and renovates, and saves them both.

2. Another distinctive feature of Christianity is the Atonement.

If, as a Roman poet has said, it be human to err, equally human is it to undergo the pangs of remorse and the fear of punishment. Dualism may, indeed, affirm an eternal independent principle of evil, and pantheism may seek to resolve all evil into good; but the conscience of the race refuses thus to be relieved of its crushing burden of guilt. In man's own unperverted and honest judgment of himself, he is an offender, not merely against the moral order of the universe, but an offender against the moral Ruler of the universe, against whom personally he has rebelled, and whose inmost moral nature has been aroused to the vindication of its righteous claims. Punishment is of course the instinctive apprehension of the soul that has sinned. Nature, it is observed, always punishes, never pardons, an offender. Human governments seldom pardon. Human society would lose its coherence, and human life itself become a hideous riot, were not punishment the rule for evil-doers, and pardon the rare exception. How, then, can impunity for sinners be looked for under the moral government of God? But the abyss thus opened is frightful; for every human being misery, and that misery eternal. Hence a wild cry everywhere for relief. Is there no

escape? Is the law to have its course? In this sphere of spirit, as in the sphere of sense, must fire always burn, and water always drown? Verily they must, says reason; there is no such thing as forgiveness. Altars and sacrifices are of no avail. From the very heights of the Platonic philosophy, more than two thousand years ago, the verdict came, that "the gods are not easily propitiated." Sorrow, O sinner! is bootless; by penance you must yourself atone for the mischief you have wrought. I will not say, that human beings in their distress would never dare to dream that God might somehow succor such misery. But I must say, what no sound thinker will venture to question, that there is no safety in reasoning from mere goodness to mercy. The rude peasant, with low, confused notions of what is due to justice and law, might have imagined that somehow pardon was attainable; but philosophy would have rebuked his presumption. And yet, in spite of philosophy, men everywhere have had their altars and victims. Whence these altars and victims? Of blind human instinct, say some, making thus the strongest possible confession of ill-desert, in the hope of averting a retribution seen to be justly impending. Of gross conceptions, say others, as though God might be wrought upon, and moved to favor, by such offerings. But penitent confession, how bitter soever it may be, is no atonement, says philosophy. Nor is God so coarse and savage a monster, as to delight in the scent of burning flesh. Let, then, these altars and victims be swept away; they are an offense to reason. And yet the altars stand, dotting every continent, and with their huge volumes of smoke blackening the whole firmament. Whatsoever it may be that builds them, and lights their fires, these altars are evidently indestructible. Philosophy may frown, but still they smoke. And their meaning is, that sin, in order to be remitted, must first be atoned for. The necessity of expiation is what they preach with their tongues of flame. But there is no real expiation in the blood of beasts and of birds. Such victims take away no sin. The whole system of bloody sacrifices is therefore vain; a dismal cheat, if it promises atonement; and pitiful at best, if it be only a confession that atonement is needed. Such is the dilemma of philosophy. Here, on the one side, is the admitted universality of sacrifice, proving its connection with something indestructible within us; and, on the other side, the demonstration of its impotency.

From this dilemma Christianity offers the only possible escape. In the sufferings and death of Christ, it sets before us a real atonement actually accomplished in history; an atonement eternally prepared, of course, since God himself, its author, is eternal; an atonement which began its saving work by the very cradle of our apostate race. It was no mere show of condescension and of sympathy, enacted for moral effect, but a real thing. Christ

actually suffered for us in his divine humanity, enduring mysterious and immeasurable agonies, that there might be a real satisfaction to the awful justice of God. Not God's honor only, but God's own nature required it. This sublime work of atonement was to him, as well as of him, penetrating the very depths of his being, and answering a holy demand, which otherwise could have been answered only by the punishment of the guilty. It was not merely that he might safely pardon, but that he might pardon at all. Pardon required some other basis than that of penitence in the offender; it required a basis of satisfied justice in God's own nature. And that basis was furnished by the sufferings and death of Christ. As for man, there was nothing for him to do, indeed there was nothing he could do, but simply accept the atonement thus accomplished for him. He had only to confess his sin, and receive forgiveness on the ground of what had been done for him by another. In this way was Adam saved, if saved at all. It mattered not that thousands of years were to roll away before the Son of Man should go as it was purposed for him. The lamb that taketh away sin was already slain—slain from before the foundation of the world, and faith had only to await the historic consummation of an eternal act. But the goal was distant, and the way was rough. And so the altar was built, and the victim brought, not of human impulse or invention, but by divine appointment; not for the taking away of sin, but only to typify the real sacrifice. That this was too crude a ritualism, beneath the dignity of its alleged Original, let no one say who has ever heard of the holy walk of Enoch, who has ever heard of the tithes paid to Melchisedek as the representative of an economy older and wider than that of Abraham. We who have never used, nor had need to use, these types, must be careful how we sit in judgment upon the pious men of the elder ages, whose faith embraced, not an ascended, but only a coming Savior. To them these types were eloquent. The gleaming knife, which slew the shrinking victim, pierced their own hearts. The flame which leaped from the altar, pointed its red finger towards the throne at once of justice and of grace. And so these men were saved, as all men might have been. The system had certainly its limitations and its perils. There was always danger that type would usurp the place of antitype. There was always danger that atonement would be sought for in the sign, rather than in the thing signified. When thus emptied of its great meaning, the whole sacrificial system of course miscarried. No wonder the Greek philosophy made such havoc of the Greek religion. No wonder the time arrived, when the masses thought all religions equally true, and philosophers thought them all equally false. Even amongst the Hebrews, faith withered into formalism. Indignant prophets accordingly denounced their temple

service as an abomination. The lamb of the priest had ceased to be suggestive of the Lamb of God. But the world has now a temple, an altar, and an offering not liable to such abuse. The sensuous types are all withdrawn. The real victim has been slain. The atonement has become an historic fact. And so faith marches out from amongst the shadows, to lay hold upon the substance. Philosophy, which derided the former, can not deride the latter. Human nature remains unchanged in its corruption, unchanged in its fears, unchanged in its craving for atonement; and there is no solid peace for the troubled conscience but in the blood of Christ.

3. The third distinctive feature of Christianity is Regeneration.

As already intimated, confession of sin is not confined to Christendom, and is no new thing in history. Universal sacrifice, of which we have just spoken, is itself a universal confession of sin. It stands confessed likewise in all literatures; even in that of China, the coldest and poorest of all. In the better literatures, as of Greece and Rome, this confession strikes down deep, pronouncing the very nature of man depraved. "It is clear," says Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, "that not one of the moral virtues springs up in us by nature." "We all have sinned," says Seneca; "some more, others less." Accordingly when St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says of all men, that they are "by nature the children of wrath," he says no more than philosophy had said before.

In regard, however, to the genesis of this confessed depravity, the ancient philosophers were greatly at fault. Assuming a better original estate of man, they explained his present character by supposing a gradual degeneracy. As Coleridge has justly observed, they "had no notion of a *fall* of man." Only this they knew, that the golden age of the race had been followed by the ages of silver, of brass, and of iron. Of course they knew of no adequate remedy. And yet near the conclusion of Plato's dialogue "*Respecting Virtue*," there is the remarkable assertion, that virtue is neither natural nor acquirable by study, but comes, if it come at all, by a divine fate, without any purpose of our own. Here at length is a finger pointing in the right direction; from the helplessness of man, to the mighty power of God.

Christianity begins its curative work by a better diagnosis of the disease. It sets in a clear light the original rectitude of man, reveals the Tempter, and reports the Fall. As by one man sin is said to have entered into the world, and that one man was the first man, and father of all men, it is seen that the poison is in our very blood. And it follows, of course, that a damage so radical can be repaired only by the hand that fashioned us.

These two points had doubtless been emphasized in the very morning of history, along with the promise of redemption and the appointment of sacrifice. If Adam and Eve repented of their sin, we may be sure that their repentance was born of faith, and that that their faith was begotten of God. But in process of time these points became obscured. The disease ran on, but its origin was forgotten, and the only infallible prescription for it lost. Hence the mistaken and fruitless attempts of heathen moralists to retrieve by culture a loss which could be retrieved only by regeneration.

But although Christianity, in its essence, is thus as old as the promise in the garden, the coming of Christ in the flesh inaugurated a new economy of the spirit. From the day of Pentecost there dates a more pungent conviction of sin, with a far greater energy of renovating grace. From that time onward, wherever the Gospel went, it darted a new light down into the depths of sin, and offered man the very intervention, of which Plato had only vaguely dreamed. It sounded a new call to repentance, rendered more urgent by what was disclosed of the origin and malignity of the evil; and accompanied this new call to repentance with the offer of certain deliverance. Christ himself touched the very heart of the matter, when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again.

But the new birth is not merely a doctrine of Christianity; it is a work of the Spirit, pledged to attend the faithful proclamation of the Gospel in every age and in every land. Persuasion to virtue was the task and function of the pagan moralist. The offer of God's renewing grace is the task and function of the Christian evangelist. And there is that in man which can be satisfied with nothing less than what is thus offered in the Gospel. He knows that he has sinned. He knows that his nature is depraved. And he knows that he has no power to restore himself to the image and favor of God. It only remains for him to be told, that the hand which first framed now offers to renew him. This, and this only, meets his case. Made as we are, deliverance from the consequences merely of sin is not enough for us; we must be delivered also from the sin itself. It matters not what difference there may be of race, of language, of rank, of culture, of outward morality; it is enough that we all are human. The first Adam is forever repeating himself in his offspring. And the one imperative necessity of every child of Adam is, to be born again.

Such is Christianity in its grand distinctive features of Incarnation, Atonement, and Regeneration. These three features are all in the line of human reason, as is seen by reference to pagan philosophies and false religions; and yet are infinitely beyond and above human reason, as is proved by the fact, so palpable to

every candid inquirer, that no pagan philosophy or religion was ever able to grasp them. Christianity thus stands absolutely and sublimely alone; transcending every other religion by all the difference there is between a line which reaches only to the clouds, and a line which reaches to the very throne and bosom of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible. And not only so, but it fully meets every want of our finite and fallen nature. Precisely those things which are peculiar to it as a system, are precisely the things we need. The conclusion is irresistible, that a system at once so unique and so essential, must be of God. And if it be of God, then, as Gamaliel told the Sanhedrim, it can not be overthrown. So long as man is man, and God is God, so long must this religion stand, working its miracles of grace.

II. It remains for us to glance briefly at the past achievements of Christianity, that we may determine whether or not it be actually advancing towards universal dominion. This we have need to do, not merely for the quickening of our own faith, but because an impression is abroad, that Christianity can not very well endure this historic test.

It is not to be denied, that there is a class of facts, which, at first sight, would seem to be hardly in keeping with the prophetic vision of universal conquest. Christianity, it is said, has been constantly shifting its theater from race to race, from continent to continent; losing in the rear, as it gains in the van, of its sounding march. Once its banner floated over Asia, even to the shores of the Yellow Sea. Once it waved up and down the Nile, streaming across the northern provinces of Africa to the pillars of Hercules. Once it rallied the Græco-Roman civilization beneath its shining folds. Now, these conquests, it is alleged, have all been lost. Asia has gone back to her old religions; and Africa has gone back to barbarism. Arabia begat a prophet, as well as Palestine; and at this hour, after twelve centuries of trial, more than a hundred millions of our race are Mohammedans. From Asia and Africa Christianity finally withdrew to Europe, and in Europe crept slowly to the north and west. The Greek and the Roman gave place to the Kelt, the Teuton, and the Slave. And even these have so soiled the banner they were elected to bear aloft, that it had to be brought across the Atlantic in quest of fresher breezes and a clearer sky. The older nations of Europe, it is asserted, are now sinking to decay, as sank the nations which, eighteen hundred years ago, skirted the Mediterranean. Two young nations are now rising rapidly to power; on the eastern horizon, imperial Russia; on this western horizon, republican America. In less than half a century, their united voice will dictate the fortunes of the world. But they, too, must rot and perish, and the Christian banner committed to their keeping, again go trailing in

the dust. So do some men amongst us interpret the annals of the past; and so do they cast the horoscope of the future.

But there is a sounder philosophy of history than this, and a brighter vision of the future. We admit apparent losses in the past; but we claim a real, and, from the beginning till now, a steady gain. In numerical strength, the gain has been immense. The Christian Church passed out from beneath the hands of the Apostles with a membership, perhaps, of half a million. When persecutions ceased in the time of Constantine, at least ten millions, or about one tenth part of the population of the Roman Empire, had taken the Christian name. And now, of the twelve hundred millions supposed to be dwelling upon the globe, nearly one third part are at least nominally Christian. From an expansion of membership, so uniform and constant, we are at liberty to anticipate nothing less in the end than universal prevalence. As to losses of territory, and shifting theaters of conquest, these are of small moment in the great account. It is only the loss of puissant races of men which can tell against us in the historic argument. And no such loss has ever occurred. The Tartar and other races of central and eastern Asia, once gained over, in large numbers, by Nestorian and other missionaries, hold a low place upon the human scale. The Greeks and the Romans were the masters of the ancient world. And these have never died; nor discarded the Christian name. The Greeks are still a Christian people, ruled by a Christian king. The Italians are still a Christian people, rapidly uniting themselves under a Christian head. And both are commencing a new career, which bids fair to outshine the old. The Greek and the Roman Churches are certainly corrupt; but each bears upon its banner the name of an inspired Apostle, and those Apostles, Andrew and Peter, were brothers; each glories in the cross of Christ; and both must return eventually, to the simpler rites and the purer doctrines of their better days. As for the newer, and perhaps still nobler, races of Northern Europe, they proved their inherent loftiness of moral temper by seizing with avidity the offered Gospel. Barbarians we have called those rugged men, who overturned the Roman Empire, and trampled its glories underneath their invading feet. But for a hundred years, or more, they had had the Scriptures in their own Gothic tongue; and when they crossed the boundaries of the Empire, as Niebuhr thought, were already Christians by a larger percentage than the race they conquered. And these Gothic tribes have never relaxed their hold upon the cross. For centuries, it is true, they wore the trappings of the papacy; but in time they sent forth Martin Luther, and gave us the Protestant Reformation. From western Europe, thus recovered to the simplicity of the Gospel, sailed the heroes of faith and of freedom, whom we call our sires. Here at last is a Church without a bishop, and a

State without a king; here at last is a Christian Republic, time's latest product, and its best. Just now, indeed, we are walking up and down the furnace of a great affliction; but the Son of God himself is with us amidst the flames, and He will see to it, that nothing shall perish but our dross.^c We are no prophets, but we all of us discern a future now dawning on our horizon, over which the Hebrew prophets would have clapped their hands. Over against us, as though to balance the globe, belting Northern Europe and Asia, nay, clasping round to meet us on our own Pacific shore, stands the great colossus of the European and Asiatic future; imperial, it is true, in government, and Greek in faith, but lifting his masses with him to intelligence and freedom, and destined to learn of us the great lesson of religious liberty for all men. France, I know, is Roman Catholic and aggressive; but the better faith of her Huguenots is steadily advancing; Protestant England, with her heart of oak, stands armed and dauntless behind her cliffs; we ourselves, will soon be ready for our task; and then the eldest son of the Latin Church will find no mischief which he will dare to do.

Millions of men, I know, are still idolaters; millions of men are still Mohammedans; and millions more still worship Bramha and Budha. But a single Christian nation of western Europe outweighs them all. When these millions will begin, in large numbers, to accept the Gospel, we can not tell; but we know that they need the Gospel, for they are men. And we know, too, that sooner or later, they must receive it at our hands. Where the Gospel once went, winning its victories, it can go again. In the vast strategy of the Christian centuries of conflict, Asia and Africa were indeed abandoned for a time, but our troops are returning to contest anew the ancient fields of victory, and already enough has been accomplished to make us confident in regard to the final issue. What we need now first, and most of all, is a better Christendom. Three hundred and thirty-five millions of mankind now answer the Christian roll-call; and they hold in their hands every art, every science, and nearly every resource of strength, in existence upon the globe. Their lands are filled with plenty; and their commerce whitens every sea. Already they clasp the round earth in their stalwart arms; and it only remains for them to lift it up, and lay it upon the bosom of its Lord.

Such, my brethren, is the religion we have in charge; and such the triumph which awaits it. For its distinctive features, separating it immeasurably from all other religions, it has Incarnation, Atonement, and Regeneration. These are at once so much above our own invention, and so exactly suited to our case, as to prove a Divine Original. And what God must have ushered into history, will not be let to fail. Not his word only, but his whole na-

ture, stands pledged to victory. Nor is this a matter of faith alone. Our faith is helped by sight. For eighteen hundred years the Christian Church has marched from conquest to conquest. The retreats and losses have been only temporary and apparent; the invasions and the gains have been substantial and abiding. The end is sure. Every false system is yet to be exploded; and every idol is yet to be ground to powder. God grant that none of us may be deaf to such a drum-beat, leading the host of the Lord's anointed to such a conquest.

SERMON XXIV.*

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THE CONTEST BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF SATAN.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities; against powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places."—Eph. 6 : 12.

THE old Persian fable declared that there was not a particle of matter nor a point of space where the spirit of light and the spirit of darkness were not waging their perpetual warfare; and the Christian Scriptures represent that a struggle, equally unceasing and universal, is going forward upon earth in the conduct of men. The contest is not between natural forces,—it is not of flesh and blood,—but it is a conflict of spirit against spirit, of good and evil, of light and darkness, of God and Satan. And this is the world's great warfare. History records the contests of nations and races, and paints for us the battle-scene where contending armies have struggled with the cannon and the sword for victory; but this is not the history of our world after all. Down below this surface of things there is the unseen contest through which every thing that comes to view has been directed. This outward appearance with which books of history have so much to do, is but the foam which breaks upon the ocean's breast at the heaving of its mighty depths, or the trembling which rocks the surface of the earth as its giant forces work within. The real struggle, and the true cause of all the struggles we behold, is that unseen and spiritual

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contest which the text discloses: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities; against powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Let us contemplate more directly this contest:

- I. Its scene.
- II. The weapons employed in it.
- III. The victory at which each is aiming.

I. We greatly mistake if we confine its scene to a single locality upon earth, or comprehend its working within a single sphere of human action. It reaches every place where the foot of man has trod, and embraces all the fields in which human activity has ever been shown. Every nation and tribe has furnished the combatants, and every continent and isle of the sea has witnessed the reality and the strength of the struggle. How far this warfare may be waged between other hosts than those contending here we need not now inquire; it is sufficient for us to notice that the scene of it is everywhere upon earth and with men. The kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan are two antagonistic forces struggling for the mastery in every human soul, and in every department of that soul's working. There is no concord between Christ and Belial through which any legitimate sphere of human action is given up undisputedly by either party to the other—both are claiming all the soul's life, and both are struggling for it all. There is no province in which we can say, this is altogether good, and there shall no evil enter here; evil is already there, and will make itself apparent in our most sacred avocations. It follows us to the sanctuary and the closet; it comes between our conscience and our God; it obscures the clear sense of duty; it blinds the interpretation of the divine commands; it weakens the faith and clouds the hope and taints the character, even in the strongest and clearest and purest religious exercises. I believe there is no Christian who will not sympathize with this remark. I believe there are none who have not felt that when they would do good evil is present with them, and that even in their highest flights of devotion, and their clearest vision of divine things, there was still a clog to bind them down to earth, and a cloud to intercept the brightness of that glory upon which they longed to gaze. It is as I suppose the experience of the soul, even after its conversion, which leads it to cry out: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" It is true then that there is no field which Satan is willing to give up to Christ. He will not yield to the Christian undisputed possession of the Sabbath any more than of the week, and demands the mastery of the sanctuary and the closet as much as of the shop and the counting-room. But on the

other hand, it is also true there is no field which Christ is willing to give up to Satan. He demands the week as much as he does the Sabbath, and would have his spirit triumph in the work just as truly as in the worship of life. All the departments of worldly business, all the joys and pleasures of daily existence, he desires should be penetrated and controlled by his Spirit. He does not yield to Satan the undisputed possession and control of a single sphere of human life any more than Satan will yield it to him. "Whether therefore," he says, "ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This then is the scene of the great contest. It is everywhere in human action. And this, moreover, is implied by the very terms in which the text presents it: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood." This is not fighting at arms' length—it is not like two armies ranged face to face and firing at each other across some dividing line—but it implies that the combatants are interlocked in each other's embrace, struggling, wrestling, on the same foothold for the mastery. Bearing in mind thus the wide extent of the battle-field, let us notice:

II. The forces employed in the contest. We often say in general terms that the contending forces here are Christ and Satan, truth and falsehood, good and evil, and this indeed covers the whole ground. But it must not be forgotten that just as the scene of this contest takes in the whole range of human experience on earth, so the combatants embrace, on the one side or the other, every energy and purpose of the soul. There is not a thought, feeling, nor action proceeding from any member of the human family but is a weapon which Christ or Satan is using for the advancement and triumph of the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness. Every book that has been written, every word that has been spoken, every influence, great or small, has aided the progress of good or evil in the human heart and the history of the world. Nothing is indifferent; nothing is neutral. You may take the broadest scope you please, and inquire into the working of any thing ever thought or felt or done among men, and when you gather up its lines of influence, you will find them all ranged directly for Christ or for Satan. Science, literature, and art; philosophy and politics; agriculture, commerce, and manufactures,—every product of human genius or industry has been a weapon in this great contest, a force employed by struggling good or evil for its own triumph. We are apt to circumscribe a certain sphere of human action and call it the religious sphere, and to select certain exercises of the soul and denominate these the special agents in the soul's religious development; but, in fact, every thing in our world has to do with religion, for every exercise favors or retards the soul's growth in holiness or sin. Pagan-

ism is not simply idolatry. We do not exhaust the meaning of any one of its systems by enumerating the gods which it recognizes or the rites of worship which it imposes. It embraces the whole life of the people, the science and the philosophy, the institutions of the state and of the family. It constructs the whole frame-work of society, and directs all the relations of man to man as truly as those of man to God. We are not apt to speak of science as religious, and yet the science of the Brahmin is the bulwark of the Brahmin's faith. We are apt to make a broad distinction between politics and religion, and yet the political constitution of China is not only intended as a favoring means for the Chinese religion, but is an essential element of it. So all through Paganism. Wherever it has unlimited influence it does not allow any thing to be dissociated from it. And if you take the kingdom of Satan in a still broader aspect, you will find it not only attempting to levy its tribute on every field of human experience, but attempting to bring all the varieties of human exercise into its own army and use them all as the host by which it shall conquer.

And it is not otherwise with Christianity. We greatly mistake if we say that Christianity belongs to this department of the soul and not to the other; to one sphere of human life and not to all. Christianity is not an art, like that of the painter or the sculptor, which can be practiced only by the cultivated artist in a certain direction and with certain materials; nor a science such as the cloistered student pursues, who must leave every other avocation, that he may have no hindrance in his scientific toil; but it is a principle of living, and he who is guided by it is an artist who can turn in no direction but that the canvas for his picture is ever before him; and he who follows after it is a student who can pursue no process of investigation without finding every other truth leading him to a closer acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus. Human conduct and character may take on an infinite variety of forms; but in all this wide diversity one element is constant; in every state, in every family, in every individual heart, there is the scene of a contest between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, and in every thought and feeling and act of public or social or private life there is a weapon employed in the great contest, and used directly by one or the other of the two combatants for the triumph of his cause.

III. What now is implied in this triumph—what is the victory at which each is aiming? Every one would give a general answer to this question in the same way. It is the triumph of truth over falsehood, of good over evil in our world. But we are prepared, from the ground already surveyed, for a more specific answer. We are thus able to see that Christ and Satan are each

aiming at the whole and undivided regulation of the human life in every department and through every faculty in which it is exercised. The whole world is to become the inheritance of the saints of the most high God, or it is to be peopled with incarnate fiends. Truth and justice and right are to triumph everywhere; the glad tidings of peace and good-will, which the angels sang when Messiah came, are to be repeated and welcomed to the uttermost parts of the earth; the reign of love and righteousness is to be seen in all authority and in all obedience; or every man's hand shall be against his neighbor, and fraud and violence and crime shall hold their undisputed sway, and war shall redden the earth more deeply than ever before with human carnage, and oppression shall strengthen still more the rod of the tyrant and the fetters of the slave.

This is the victory: Christ or Satan, truth or falsehood, righteousness or injustice, love or selfishness, peace or war, the elevation of mankind to their highest dignity and bliss, or their depression to the lowest possible degradation and despair; the song of unbroken gladness from a ransomed race, or the unmingled wailings which shall rise from a burdened and despairing world. Such is the result at which every individual at every moment of his life is aiming, whether he will it or not. Toward this result, on the one side or the other, the whole history of our world has been shaped in every age. History is no such play of dancing shadows as often represented in the books which profess to narrate it, but it is the substantial wrestling of these two deep and mighty and spiritual forces in the thoughts and feelings and actions of men. The history of our world is nothing more nor less than the record how Christ has wrestled in the human soul and in human conduct, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities; against powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Thus has it ever been; and the greatest event in history, or the least, will alike illustrate it. I do not know that there was a greater event in ancient history than the founding of Alexandria, or a more momentous day than that of Arbéla; but to our eyes, removed so far from the obscurities of the times, how different are the real forces in those struggles from what appeared to the men who seemed to wage them! We can see that the question then at issue was not merely between Greeks and Persians—between races of men and sections of the globe—but between forces unseen to the bodily eye; between thoughts and ideas which, using men as their instruments, were struggling for a victory of life or death, from the time of Cyrus to the time of Alexander. It does not invalidate this in the least that the human actors in the contest were unconscious of it. Let it be that he who wept because there was not another world to conquer, had before his eye nothing

but the lust of conquest, yet was there something quite other than this which controlled him, he knew not how nor why. And it is only because we stand upon the vantage ground of more than twenty centuries of succeeding time that we can tell what it was and why it was. It is not fleets and armies — it is not physical force which rules the world. It is not men but ideas which are struggling for the mastery in the history of our race. It is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan which are wrestling here, and God watches over the contest, giving strength from age to age to the right, never hastening its triumph, and never suffering it to be delayed.

Napoleon is said to have uttered the sentiment that Providence is always on the side of the largest battalion. I know not upon what authority the saying is ascribed to him. It accords neither with his own fixed faith in destiny nor with the facts in his earlier or later career. But, whether he said it or not, it is not true. Providence has not always been on the side of the greater physical force, for this is not the power which has been the most effective or triumphant in the world. What was the physical power of the crucified Nazarene and his eleven followers who forsook him and fled when he was apprehended — what were these to cope with the legions of Rome and the empire of the earth? Can a straw stem the ocean? Can a feather stand against the whirlwind? And yet hardly three centuries from the crucifixion a disciple of Christ sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, and the world lay at his feet.

Is there in modern times a greater battle, one upon which mightier results seem to hang, than that which was fought at Tours between the advancing hosts of the Saracens and the resisting bands of Christian Europe? But what was the physical power of Charles Martel to cope with that tide of steel which had overwhelmed Arabia, Persia, Syria, Africa, and Spain, and which swept on till it threatened to submerge the civilized world? The German bands which undertook to stay it were brave enough, and their leader was brave and wise, but the torrent swept them resistlessly before it. It was not physical force which decided this most important battle at the end of the second day of the fight. According to the Arabian chronicler of the event, there rose, amid the advancing and triumphant host, the cry: "The enemy are plundering our camps." No one could tell whence it came, nor why, but it spread through the army and touched the victorious warriors like the angel of the Lord. They turned back to defend their hard-earned spoil, and this appearance of retreat revived the drooping spirits and closed up the broken ranks of the Christians, and led them to an impetuous and successful onset. It was a providence on the weak and broken and almost vanquished side which turned the tide of battle and rolled back the advancing

wave of Saracenic invasion. There were spiritual forces represented in the conflict, and these, though unseen, were more mighty than all the material agencies employed in it.

These instances illustrate the uniform law. That unseen contest, whose arena and forces and aims we have considered, lies beneath and shapes every event in history. All the movements of men which the natural eye beholds are but the direct expression of this spiritual struggle. And in this very truth do we find a most profound and permanent occasion for thanksgiving.

That all history is moved and molded by this struggle is of itself the indication of what must be the final issue. The struggle can not be eternal. Its unending continuance would be of itself a triumph of the wrong. God has permitted it to come in order that the principalities and powers which have set themselves against him might be permanently overthrown. He will be the victor. Has he begun a work which he has not the power and will to finish? Nay, will not he finish it as he designed to do from the beginning, when he purposed to spoil his foes and make a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it? And may we not even now rejoice and praise him in the confidence with which we expect that he, having put all things under his feet, shall at length ascend to his throne with the shout of a conqueror, and gladden his people with the glory of his perfect triumph? The enemy said: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his thrones." Wherefore, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

On this day, summoned together as we are by the executive head of the nation to give thanks unto God for the hopes and deliverances he has afforded us in our pending national struggle, I know of no theme more worthy of our thoughts in the house of God; for I know of none better fitted to inspire us with gratitude than that which shows the connection of our national struggle with the great struggle of the Lord's kingdom. This connection is abundantly apparent in the light of the truth we have now considered. That which we have seen to be true of every movement in history, but which is so often concealed by the prominence of outward and material interests, is clear as day in the war which enlists so largely our thoughts and feelings at the present hour. No thoughtful observer can regard this as a contest of races or sec-

tions or material interests. At the bottom of the strife is the struggle of opposing thoughts. That which is to be decided is not a question of men or parties—these are but the instruments or agents of a mightier force than they—it is a question of right and wrong, whose very prominence, and, much more, whose decision, marks an advancing stage in the great struggle of the world's history. That such a question is before us, and what the question is, are apparent almost upon the surface. All over the civilized world the question of society, the question of man's true relations to his fellow-man, is pressing itself upon the attention of men as in no period of history before. To-day, if we cast the eye on Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the mouth of the Seine to the mouth of the Danube, we find that all the movements of courts and cabinets and fleets and armies—that the most prominent and numerous discussions in the senate and by the press—that the most intense and earnest thoughts and feelings and actions of common men—all move in obedience to one central inspiration, which is breathing into every heart some new conviction of its organic fellowship with other hearts, and which thus binds all the movements of the present time unto itself, as gravity binds the planets to the sun.

This is, if possible, even more manifest in our own land. Long before our present civil strife the question which divided parties, and laid its hand as no other question has ever done upon the beating heart of American life, did not relate so much to political economy as to social morality—was not a question of wealth or trade or industry, but of human rights and equality and brotherhood. Are all men born free and equal? Is there something in a man's manhood which entitles him to respect quite above and independent of his color or caste or outward condition? Is the true constitution of society one that permits or that shall eternally prohibit human slavery? This is the question which has long roused and divided the nation, and which is at the present hour the mighty issue between contending armies. I know it is very common for us to say that we are fighting for the Government, the Constitution, the laws; but the real and controlling issue is something far deeper and more wide-reaching than this. Governments and constitutions have very little moment in comparison with human rights and social privileges. They have very little worth except as means or instruments of these. They have perished ever. The shores of history are burdened with their wrecks; while every wind and wave and current in human affairs has borne the doctrine of human fellowship and brotherhood nearer to its haven. The question of society is far more important than any question of government can be. Our Government may or may not need a reconstruction, but this is of very little moment in comparison with the question

whether those views of society out of which government springs, and by which all government must eventually be controlled, shall among us rest upon their normal basis of human brotherhood and Christian love; whether our social edifice, which is even now rearing amid the tumults of the times, shall show itself, when completed, like the city of God into which there shall enter nothing that defileth; and our land, which we trust God is renovating, though by blood, shall be everywhere not only united, but free—a land not only of law, but of liberty and love, wherein the sun, which this morning gathered his pavilion from the mists which rose round Mount Katahdin, and which to-night shall draw the curtains of his setting from the clouds which veil the Golden Gate, shall look down upon no rod of the oppressor and no fetter of the slave.

This is the question most controlling in the nation to-day. We may not like it; we may turn our backs upon it; but it sets itself before our face, and looks us in the eye. Men may try to cover it up, but how grandly does God uncover it by the movement of events, and hold it forth for our inspection! Our armies have advanced or retreated, but you will bear me witness that there has been no retrogression, but a continued onward march of the sentiment of freedom among us. Every month, every day, has witnessed not only a growing reverence for law and love of liberty for ourselves, but a growing purpose also that law and liberty shall be the boon of all men. Was our duty to the bondman ever so plain before the people of the North as it is to-day? And is it not also true that our disposition to do the duty was never before so strong?

It ought not to surprise, and it need not trouble us, that the sword of steel has been drawn in this contest. We may wish it were otherwise; we may wish that the triumph of the Prince of Peace were fully come. We may long and pray for the hastening of the time when the voice of strife shall forever cease. But when that day shall dawn, the blessings which it shall shed, rich and abundant as the light, upon the earth will be the blessings of the completed triumph; while the history of the world has only shown a struggle for the victory which it has not yet attained. But let us remember the nature of the struggle, that it is not with flesh and blood, though by means of these, but against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places;" and, remembering this, let us not fear the result of our present commotions—not because man is wise nor institutions are mighty; not because the tocsin of war has been sounded, and our young men have gone up and are going forth strong and earnest for the struggle; not because of the victories upon land and by sea, which have filled us with joy, and for which we praise the God of our fathers to-

day—not upon these let us place our hope. “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.” It is the struggle of Christ’s kingdom, and the Lord is king, blessed be his name forever. He who was anointed for the special work of preaching liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound, will proclaim these glad tidings, and nothing shall stay the coming of this acceptable year of the Lord. What are nations, what are men, what are ages of time, to this? He has time enough for it all, for he works even as he dwells in the fullness of his own eternity. “A thousand years are before thee as one day, and one day as a thousand years.” He has not only time enough, but generations and nations sufficient for the result. “He increaseth the nations and scattereth them; he enlargeth the nations and straiteneth them again.”

The tears which flow to-day over loved ones who have fallen need not be tears of unmixed grief. Not one of the brave departed has yielded up his life in vain. There are other interests in this struggle than those of flesh and blood; there are other ends to be gained by it than the eye of sense can see; and for these momentous issues there has been no fruitless offering. Not a tear, not a drop of blood, not an earnest effort, not a noble soul, has been given to this sacred cause for naught. Not one shall be unrecompensed in the great result to which all have ministered; and not one shall be forgotten in the day of great remembrance, when all things now obscure shall see the light. There is an Eye which has watched where every hero fell; there is a Heart which has sounded every depth of agony which this bitter strife has cost; there is a Hand, never weary and never at a fault, which has garnered up and shall sow as fruitful seed for future harvests every work of self-devotion, every uncomplaining act of loyalty to truth and right and liberty and God. Oh! no, my friends, amid these tears, which it is right to shed, and these agonies which at times we can not fail to feel; amid the weariness with which we think of toils already suffered, and the anxiety with which we wait for tidings yet to come—tidings which we always long, but often dread to hear; in the remembrance of all that is past and the uncertainty of all that is to come, we may yet rejoice, and this is a fit occasion of thanksgiving. We praise God that this struggle is his own, and that he is never defeated. We praise him for the victories already achieved, and the complete salvation he graciously permits us to expect at his hands. We praise him for every step of the way in which it has pleased him to lead us; for the days of darkness as well as those of sunshine; for the battles lost as well as the battles won. For in all these, in defeats as well as in victories, has he not guided us in the way we can now acknowledge to be the best, not only teaching us, by them all, new lessons

of submission and patience and fortitude and courage and hope ; but by them also enlarging our views of his plans, and strengthening our faltering resolutions to do his will? Therefore, do we praise him because "he bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught ; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host—a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety ; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy ; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord, he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord ! be upon us, according as we hope in thee."

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

The Fulton-Street Prayer-Meeting.

It is a matter of devout gratitude and thankfulness to God, who so continues to bless this consecrated place of prayer as to make it like the well-watered garden of the Spirit. No finite mind can measure or estimate the blessed influences of this daily prayer-meeting in its ever-widening and salutary effect on the souls of men, and the prosperity and progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. There is a manifest fresh baptism of the Spirit from day to day in a newly awakened interest above that in weeks gone by. The Spirit of God seems to inspire the devotions of the hour. This revival of interest, we think, is in direct answer to prayer. Christians have been praying for many days past that the Lord would revive his work. Now and then persons relate what God is doing by the power of his Holy Spirit in other places, and the fire kindles. Some rise and ask for prayer for themselves or others. Some relate the facts of their own recent religious experience. All this shows that the Lord has not forsaken us.

Brigade Prayer-Meetings.

THE following statements should stimulate the hearts of all praying ones to more earnest supplications for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the army. It seems almost a miracle of grace that souls should be awakened and converted

amid battle-scenes. But nothing is too hard for God to accomplish.

A gentleman said he had been now about two years engaged in the Army of the Potomac. He was engaged in distributing religious reading. He said he had just come from the Army of the Potomac, and he was happy to say that there was a greatly increased religious interest among very many of the regiments in this branch of the service. Regimental and brigade prayer-meetings are held nearly every day in some portions of this army. Some of the chaplains had said to him that they could not discontinue the prayer-meetings if they would. The men demand them, and they must be held. Many are awakened. Many are converted. Many are singing a new song, in whose mouths, not long since, were oaths and cursing and bitterness. It is a good time in that army. True there is a great deal of roughness and wickedness. But these men have tender hearts, and the Gospel can reach them. The gospel is good for the army. He had seen its power among the soldiers, as he had seen it nowhere else. "You will have to go into the army," said the speaker, "to know how much the Gospel is worth to a soul, and how unspeakably precious Jesus is to a believer dying with wounds or disease. Oh! how peacefully they die! It seems as if Jesus made up the lack of near and dear friends, and their kindly ministrations, by his more im-

mediate and sensible presence. Come with me and see a soldier die, and you will feel all I feel. Only the other day, I called upon a wounded soldier, to know what I could do for him. I found him wonderfully calm and peaceful, lying upon the cold ground :

"Can I do any thing for you?" said I.

"Oh! no; I want nothing. I have Jesus here with me, and he is all I want."

"But you can not live but a few minutes or hours."

"I know it; but I am in perfect peace. Please put my blanket over me, and cover my face over, and let me shut all out but Jesus, and so let me die."

"I bid him farewell, and did as he desired, and left him with a face radiant with joy, as I covered it with his blanket, and as he said: 'Good-by.' Oh! come with me to the army if you would know all the Gospel is worth to the soul."

The Boy Missionary.

At the Fulton-Street Prayer-Meeting many striking incidents are related which are instructive and impressive. They are the fruits of the Spirit in answer to prayer. They should increase the faith of Christians, and warm their hearts in more active efforts in every good word and work. The following are beautiful illustrations:

A gentleman told the story of a boy who had been a member of a Sabbath-school somewhere at the East, who was taken West and bound out to a farmer in a neighborhood where there were no Sunday-school and no religious services of any kind. The boy was exceedingly uneasy, and felt that

he could not live so. He heard of a missionary fifteen miles off, and he resolved to go and see him, and ask him to come and organize a Sabbath-school. So away he trudged all the fifteen miles on foot, and had a wide river to cross, to see the missionary. He spread before him the condition of the neighborhood, and begged him to come and start a Sabbath-school. The missionary came; a Sabbath-school was started; and now, said the speaker, in that place, where there were no Sabbath-school and no means of grace, there is a church of forty members. So much a little boy can do.

Another gentleman from the West said he would relate a case somewhat similar. An Eastern little boy was bound out to an old farmer, who became very much attached to him; but he perceived the boy was very disconsolate. He asked what was his trouble? The lad said he had no Sabbath-school to go to, and no church, and he could not live so.

The old man said: "Here is so much money; see how much others will give, and we will have books and organize a school, if that is what you want."

The neighbors contributed; but some doubted about starting the school, for there was no one to open it with prayer. The lad said he would pray, if no one else would; so the school was opened. The speaker said he would make a long story short by saying that not long afterward, that old man of eighty and that little boy were sitting together at the same communion-table to celebrate the sufferings and death of our ever-blessed and adorable Saviour, who came to seek and save the lost, the old and the young.

